

## ELVA'S PROFESSION

By John Elkins

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Cedric Shaw was intently watching the girl across the room. Sometimes the swaying dancers in the hotel ballroom came between him and her; but always his gaze went back persistently to the bright, animated face of the young woman who stood talking with an elderly lady. The first thing that had attracted him was the absence of the painted lips and cheeks, which he saw on almost all of the young girls present. Next to take his attention was the pretty dancing gown, which unlike the others covered her back and came above the shoulders and around in a becoming line.

The young man could not have been called "straight-laced" or old-fashioned, but a certain fine respect for womanhood, which had been carefully instilled in him by his mother, felt a kind of repulsion at the artificially covered faces and the too scantily covered forms of the girls he met in society everywhere. He felt that this girl must be different, and as he watched her face his conviction grew. He determined to know her and started out to see if he could find some one to introduce him.

Finally he accomplished his object and soon found himself guiding Miss Burt through the mazes of the dancers. Yes, decidedly Miss Burt was "different." It was not long before Shaw's heart began to give curlicut but unmistakable evidences of being considerably off its normal condition.

He managed to get an invitation to call, which was not exactly difficult, since Miss Burt was quite as anxious that he should ask as he was to get the permission. If the truth must be told she was at the same time experiencing something like the same alarming symptoms the young

man was suffering. She had not analyzed her reasons for being attracted; she simply knew that she was. As these things are happening every second among mortals on this globe it seems a waste of time to inquire why.

Elva Burt lived alone in a "furnished room" in the big city. The bed masqueraded as a couch during the day and a screen covered the sta-



He Lights a Bit of Paper So's He Can Look Better

tionary washstand. She made it look like a sitting room, and the house was clean and respectable, if not fashionable. Still she felt a slight qualm at receiving the stranger in her humble quarters. He seemed to her like a man used to good society, one used to mingling with cultured people in refined surroundings. In this supposition she was right. The mother of Cedric Shaw had belonged